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Duxbury Clipper

Professionally Speaking ... Hometown Cable Treasure

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John Britten, the host of *Professionally Speaking*, is a curious man -- a quality that has helped propel the show into one of Adelphia Cable's gems in local programming.

Britten is an interviewer whose laid back conversational style has often proved to draw out and animate "wooden" or seemingly unflappable guests. Ten years of the one half hour profile segments have seen nearly 300 guests captured in video personality snapshots.

Britten launched *Professionally Speaking* after becoming a member of the town's cable television committee. The group had recently sealed

Commerce type show. Sweetser's had just closed and I thought how sad it was that Duxbury didn't do more to promote local business."

Britten said he eventually ran out of storefronts but not out of interesting guests and soon the program began featuring interesting people in town with special hobbies and careers, like John Shafer, CEO of Dunkin' Donuts.

Britten said he prefers to have only a brief telephone conversation with the interviewees before the show, to keep the curiosity honest.

The veteran host relies heavily on tips, which lead him to interesting guests. Among his favorites were Rica Moore



a contract with Adelphia that included a local studio.

Show business celebrities including actor Chris Cooper from *October Sky*, Peter and Bobby Farrelly, directors and producers of *Something About Mary* and *Dumb and Dumber* fame and Gary King, Hollywood special effects veteran, have all been quizzed by Britten.

With a background in broadcasting and marketing, Britten was just an interested citizen with an idea who soon found his own programming niche, focusing on local people in business.

"Frank LeBart really started the ball rolling in terms of local interview programming, in his *Duxbury Dialogue*, which ran from 1989 to 1994. I wanted to do something a little different — a sort of Chamber of

who invented the bunny hop and recorded eight children's albums for Walt Disney and David Collins who invented the bar code now used universally for identification.

He also has had some fun along the way, getting his hair styled and cut for a segment or lifting weights with Kim Anderson, Miss Mass. Bodybuilder.

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When not in front of the camera, Britten is an independent investment advisor with an office on Bay Road. He earned his broadcasting stripes at the U. of Florida and at ABC-TV before switching to business with Merrill Lynch.

Britten calls his program "a labor of love," completely volunteer, from the host to the

small crew who help produce it each week.

A key person in the mix is Roz Thompson, a longtime resident who is always on the lookout for potential guests. Cameraman Bob Burgess helps run the show behind the scenes and station manager Paul Falcone checks names and titles which are superimposed below the guest during the taping.

Professionally Speaking airs twice a week in Duxbury on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m. and -- unusually for local cable productions -- in Marshfield, Kingston and Plymouth.

Britten said he plans to continue the show as long as the community appears to enjoy it, noting that Duxbury is a town with an endless supply of interesting people.

"I wish that more people in town would understand that the television studio is primarily there for them," he said. "We

are amazed that the facilities don't get more usage by the general public."

Adelphia Cable has scheduled four free training sessions for citizens beginning April 5 from 7 to 8:30 pm, to teach residents how to produce and tape their own program.

Adelphia Production Assistant Nancy O'Connell said the course encourages people to use the equipment, which is paid for by Adelphia users as part of the town's cable contract.

Currently *Professionally Speaking*, *Talking Wrestling* and *Senior Issues* are the only programs regularly produced at the studio for broadcast on Duxbury's Channel 3. Government programming on channel 98 covers town selectmen and other meetings off site.

O'Connell said that word is beginning to get out that local television is a great way to get a message out. The library staff

recently used the studio facilities to produce *Teen Talk* and a storytelling contest. The Girl Scout leaders put together a public service message on cookie sales and the Senior Citizens on a benefit art auction.

O'Connell said the studio also loans out camcorders so that off site taping can be done. Recently, Habitat for Humanity, the DEF spelling bee and Recplex proponents used the facilities to air programs.

Other shows have highlighted the annual King Caesar Lecture series and community events including, "Uptown at the Ellison."

Britten said he would particularly like to see students in the schools use the facilities more. "It's a great training ground for someone with interest in the broadcast field. All you need is a good idea and away you go."

Host John Britten of *Professionally Speaking* interviews Kate Sowdon, a stenciler